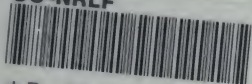
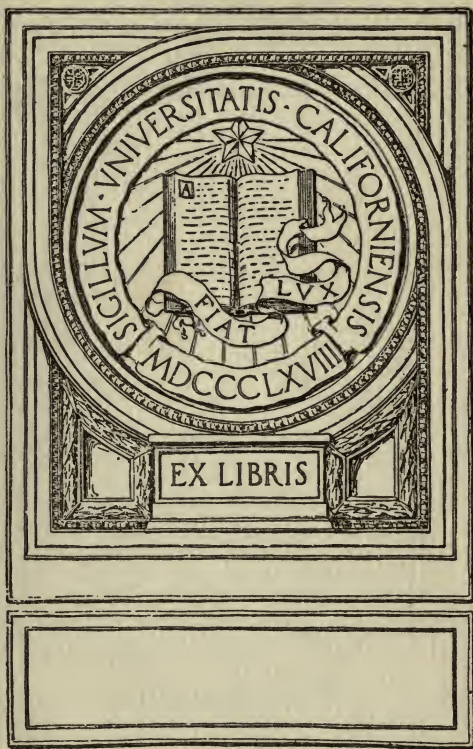


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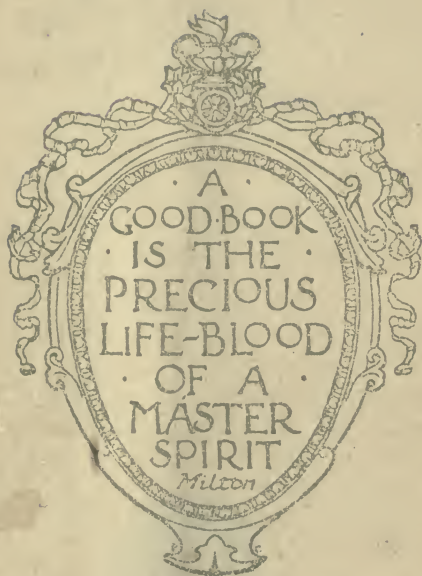








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· OF A ·  
MASTER  
SPIRIT

*Milton*



*The* KINGS TREASURIES  
OF LITERATURE



GENERAL EDITOR  
SIR A. T. QULLER COUCH



RUPERT BROOKE

# MODERN POETRY



EDITED BY  
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M.A //

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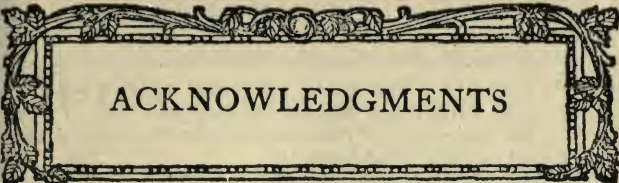
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PART I  
ENGLAND





# MODERN POETRY

## PART I.—ENGLAND

THE poems chosen for this section are not Patriotic songs in the commonly accepted sense of the term. That is to say, they do not slap us metaphorically on the back, shouting to all the world—that does not want to listen—that one Englishman is worth three men of any other nation, that Britannia rules the waves, that Britons never, never, *never* shall be slaves, and so on and so forth. Your truly patriotic poem does not glorify War with a ranting jingoism, nor flaunt a swelled-headed Imperialism in the face of exasperated foreigners. Rather, it expresses the true love of England for England's sake—the love of English scenery, of English life and thought.

There is a wonderful sense of intimacy about the poetry of the Love of England. "There is a song of England which none shall ever sing," for this true patriotism lies too deep for expression in words. It is all that England means to the Englishman. The 'song' is within us already; and though the poet

may strike the chord in us, he need not—indeed he cannot—analyse it. Such a poem as the *Song of England* may not be so sentimental as most German songs of the Fatherland, nor so heroic as those sung upon the theme of La Patrie, nor so yearning as the songs of Italia; yet it breathes a more confident and intimate love than any.

Or again, the poet may conjure by his magic art, as he does in *Puck's Song*, an England of years long gone by. Yet he does not guide us through an unfamiliar pageant of the centuries, but over the roads, and fields, and downs of the *same* England which we know and love to-day.

Or perhaps, as in Mr. Flecker's poem, the Englishman in a far land tells of what England means to him. And this is not the Flag that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze, but the fields shining after rain, the kingcups, and the voices of the pines.

Lastly, in the sonnet called *The Soldier*, the poet as it were identifies himself with England, and all that England stands for in the world. Already one of the best known, this is also one of the greatest sonnets in the language; for it is probable that no poem has ever been written, or ever can be written, to convey a truer and more intimate love of England and English ideals. Rupert Brooke, the author of this poem, the youngest and most promising of all modern English poets, died during the Dardanelles campaign, and was buried on a Greek island.

## A SONG OF ENGLAND

THERE is a song of England that none shall ever sing;  
    So sweet it is and fleet it is  
That none whose words are not as fleet as birds upon  
    the wing,  
    And regal as her mountains,  
    And radiant as the fountains  
Of rainbow-coloured sea-spray that every wave can  
    fling  
Against the cliffs of England, the sturdy cliffs of  
    England,  
    Could more than seem to dream of it,  
    Or catch one flying gleam of it,  
Above the seas of England that never cease to sing.

There is a song of England that only lovers know;  
    So rare it is and fair it is,  
Oh, like a fairy rose it is upon a drift of snow,  
    So cold and sweet and sunny,  
    So full of hidden honey,  
So like a flight of butterflies where rose and lily blow  
Along the lanes of England, the leafy lanes of England;  
    When flowers are at their vespers  
    And full of little whispers,  
The boys and girls of England shall sing it as they go.

There is a song of England that only love may sing,  
    So sure it is and pure it is;  
And seaward with the seamew it spreads a whiter wing,

And with the skylark hovers  
Above the tryst of lovers,  
Above the kiss and whisper that led the lovely Spring  
Through all the glades of England, the ferny glades  
of England,  
Until the way enwound her  
With sprays of May, and crowned her  
With stars of frosty blossom in a merry morris-ring.  
There is a song of England that haunts her hours of  
rest;  
The calm of it and balm of it  
Are breathed from every hedgerow that blushes to  
the West:  
From cottage doors that nightly  
Cast their welcome out so brightly  
On the lanes where laughing children are lifted and  
caressed  
By the tenderest hands in England, hard and blistered  
hands of England;  
And from the restful sighing  
Of the sleepers that are lying  
With the arms of God around them on the night's  
contented breast.  
There is a song of England that wanders in the wind;  
So sad it is and glad it is  
That men who hear it madden and their eyes are wet  
and blind,  
For the lowlands and the highlands  
Of the unforgotten islands,

For the Islands of the Blessèd, and the rest they  
cannot find

As they grope in dreams to England and the love  
they left in England;

Little feet that danced to meet them,

And the lips that used to greet them,

And the watcher at the window in the home they left  
behind.

There is a song of England that thrills the beating  
blood

With burning cries and yearning

Tides of hidden aspiration hardly known or under-  
stood;

Aspirations of the creature

Tow'rds the unity of Nature;

Sudden chivalries revealing whence the longing is  
renewed

In the men that live for England, live and love and  
die for England:

By the light of their desire

They shall blindly blunder higher

To a wider, grander Kingdom and a deeper, nobler Good.

There is a song of England that only God can hear;  
So gloriously victorious,

It soars above the choral stars that sing the Golden  
Year;

Till even the cloudy shadows

That wander o'er her meadows

In silent purple harmonies declare His glory there,

Along the hills of England, the billowy hills of England,  
While heaven rolls and ranges  
Through all the myriad changes  
That mirror God in music to the mortal eye and ear.

*There is a song of England that none shall ever sing :*

*So sweet it is and fleet it is*

*That none whose words are not as fleet as birds upon  
the wing,*

*And regal as her mountains,*

*And radiant as the fountains*

*Of rainbow-coloured sea-spray that every wave can fling  
Against the cliffs of England, the sturdy cliffs of England,*

*Could more than seem to dream of it,*

*Or catch one flying gleam of it,*

*Above the seas of England that never cease to sing.*

ALFRED NOYES.

### PUCK'S SONG

SEE you the ferny ride that steals

Into the oak-woods far?

O that was whence they hewed the keels

That rolled to Trafalgar.

And mark you where the ivy clings

To Bayham's mouldering walls?

O there we cast the stout railings

That stand around St. Paul's.

See you the dimpled track that runs

All hollow through the wheat?

O that was where they hauled the guns  
That smote King Philip's fleet.

Out of the Weald, the secret Weald,  
Men sent in ancient years,  
The horse-shoes red at Flodden Field,  
The Arrows at Poitiers.

See you our little mill that clacks  
So busy by the brook?  
She has ground her corn and paid her tax  
Ever since Domesday Book.

See you our stilly woods of oak?  
And the dread ditch beside?  
O that was where the Saxons broke  
On the day that Harold died.

See you the windy levels spread  
About the gates of Rye?  
O that was where the Northmen fled,  
When Alfred's ships came by.

See you our pastures wide and lone,  
Where the red oxen browse?  
O there was a City thronged and known  
Ere London boasted a house.

And see you, after rain, the trace  
Of mound and ditch and wall?  
O that was a Legion's camping-place,  
When Caesar sailed from Gaul.

And see you marks that show and fade  
Like shadows on the Downs?

O they are the lines the Flint Men made  
To guard their wondrous towns.

Trackway and Camp and City lost,  
Salt Marsh where now is corn;  
Old Wars, old Peace, old Arts that cease,  
And so was England born!

She is not any common Earth,  
Water or wood or air,  
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye.  
Where you and I will fare.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

### THOUGHTS OF ENGLAND

OH, shall I never, never be home again!  
Meadows of England shining in the rain  
Spread wide your daisied lawns: your ramparts green  
With briar fortify, with blossom screen  
Till my far morning—and O streams that slow  
And pure and deep through plains and playlands go,  
For me your love and all your kingcups store,  
And—dark militia of the southern shore,  
Old fragrant friends—preserve me the last lines  
Of that long saga that you sang me, pines,  
When, lonely boy, beneath the chosen tree  
I listened, with my eyes upon the sea.

O traitor pines, you sang what life has found  
The falsest of fair tales.

Earth blew a far-horn prelude all around,  
That native music of her forest home,  
While from the sea's blue fields and syren dales  
Shadows and light noon spectres of the foam  
Riding the summer gales  
On aery viols plucked an idle sound.

Hearing you sing, O trees,  
Hearing you murmur, "There are older seas,  
That beat on vaster sand,  
Where the wise snailfish move their pearly towers  
To carven rocks and sculptured promont'ries,"  
Hearing you whisper, "Lands  
Where blaze the unimaginable flowers."

Beneath me in the valley waves the palm,  
Beneath, beyond the valley, breaks the sea;  
Beneath me sleep in mist and light and calm  
Cities of Lebanon, dream-shadow-dim,  
Where Kings of Tyre and Kings of Tyre did rule  
In ancient days in endless dynasty,  
And all around the snowy mountains swim  
Like mighty swans afloat in heaven's pool.

But I will walk upon the wooded hill  
Where stands a grove, O pines, of sister pines,  
And when the downy twilight droops her wing  
And no sea glimmers and no mountain shines  
My heart shall listen still.

For pines are gossip pines the wide world through  
And full of Runic tales to sigh or sing.  
'Tis ever sweet through pines to see the sky

Blushing a deeper gold or darker blue.  
'Tis ever sweet to lie  
On the dry carpet of the needles brown,  
And though the fanciful green lizard stir  
And windy odours light as thistledown  
Breathe from the lavdanon and lavender,  
Half to forget the wandering and the pain,  
Half to remember days that have gone by,  
And dream and dream that I am home again!

JAMES ELROY FLECKER.

### THE SOLDIER

IF I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,

A pulse in the eternal mind, no less

Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England  
given;

Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;

And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,

In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

RUPERT BROOKE.

**PART II**  
**THE CALL OF THE SEA**



## PART II.—THE CALL OF THE SEA

### THE SEA AND THE COUNTRY

MODERN poetry on the subject of the Sea and the Country strikes a new note, and that note is 'Escape.' Not altogether new, perhaps, for whenever the poet's world becomes conventionalised, like Vergil's Rome, the call of the Land or the Sea becomes insistent. But it is new to this extent: that never in the world's history has the average man got further away from natural conditions. Life passed in a world of machines itself becomes mechanical. Our food, our clothes, our comforts and necessities are produced for us we know not how; pavements and houses cover the open fields; street-lamps take the place of the moon and stars; and we read the moods of the elements by tapping a barometer in the hall.

And so to nearly every Englishman there comes at times the strong call of the Sea or the Country—the longing to escape from bricks and mortar and conventional ideas. It is this call—this vague and inarticulate longing—that the poets express in such poems as *Sea-Fever* and *Wander-Thirst*, and from a different point of view, in *The Winnowers* and *The Vagabond*.

The poems here quoted speak for themselves: one cannot miss, for instance, the sense of loneliness and space in *Messmates*, the April freshness of *The Adventurers*, or the delicate imagery and haunting suggestion of *The Way through the Woods*. The stanzas here called *Nearing Cape Horn* are taken from a long poem entitled *Dauber*. These few stanzas will give some idea of the amazing insight and conviction with which sea-sights and sounds are depicted throughout the work. There is hardly a stanza in this great narrative poem that is not a brilliant sea-note—the reef-points pattering softly overhead—

Softly, but hurrying too, as children tread,  
A hush, a long swift hurry of little feet—

the swinging masts—the snow—the great storm. It must be read entire to be appreciated, for it is doubtful whether there is a more magnificent sea-picture in the language.

### SEA-FEVER

I MUST go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea  
and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song, and the  
white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and the grey dawn  
breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the  
running tide  
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds  
flying,  
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the  
sea-gull's crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant  
gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the  
wind's like a whetted knife,  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-  
rover,  
And a quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long  
trick's over.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

1869 JOHN WINTER

WHAT ails John Winter, that so oft  
Silent he sits apart?  
The neighbours cast their looks on him;  
But deep he hides his heart.

In Deptford streets the houses small  
Huddle forlorn together.  
Whether the wind blow or be still,  
'Tis soiled and sorry weather.

But over these dim roofs arise  
Tall masts of ocean ships.  
Whenever John Winter looked at them  
The salt blew on his lips..

He cannot pace the street about,  
But they stand before his eyes!  
The more he shuns them, the more proud  
And beautiful they rise.

He turns his head, but in his ear  
The steady Trade-Winds run,  
And in his eye the endless waves  
Ride on into the sun.

His little child at evening said,  
" Now tell us, dad, a tale  
Of naked men that shoot with bows,  
Tell of the spouting whale! "

He told old tales, his eyes were bright,  
His wife looked up to see,  
And smiled on him: but in the midst  
He ended suddenly.

He bade his boys good-night, and kissed  
And held them to his breast.  
They wondered and were still, to feel  
Their lips so fondly pressed.

He sat absorbed in silent gloom.  
His wife lifted her head

From sewing, and stole up to him,  
"What ails you, John?" she said.

He spoke no word. A silent tear  
Fell softly down her cheek.  
She knelt beside him, and his hand  
Was on her forehead meek.

But even as his tender touch  
Her dumb distress consoled,  
The mighty waves danced in his eyes  
And through the silence rolled.

There fell a soft November night,  
Restless with gusts that shook  
The chimneys, and beat wildly down  
The flames in the chimney nook.

John Winter lay beside his wife,  
'Twas past the mid of night.  
Softly he rose, and in dead hush  
Stood stealthily upright.

Softly he came where slept his boys,  
And kissed them in their bed;  
One stretched his arms out in his sleep:  
At that he turned his head.

And now he bent above his wife,  
She slept a peace serene,  
Her patient soul was in the peace  
Of breathing slumber seen.

At last, he kissed one aching kiss,  
Then shrank again in dread,  
And from his own home guiltily  
And like a thief he fled.

But now with darkness and the wind  
He breathes a breath more free,  
And walks with calmer steps, like one  
Who goes with destiny.

And see, before him the great masts  
Tower with all their spars  
Black on the dimness, soaring bold  
Among the mazy stars.

In stormy rushings through the air  
Wild scents the darkness filled,  
And with a fierce forgetfulness  
His drinking nostril thrilled.

He hasted with quick feet, he hugged  
The wildness to his breast,  
As one who goes the only way  
To set his heart at rest.

When morning glimmered, a great ship  
Dropt gliding down the shore.  
John Winter coiled the anchor ropes  
Among his mates once more.

LAURENCE BINYON.

## CHRISTMAS AT SEA

THE sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;

The decks were like a slide, where the seaman scarce could stand,

The wind was a nor' wester, blowing squally off the sea;

And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;

But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.

We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,

And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tack'd and tack'd between the South Head and the North;

All day we haul'd the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;

All day\*as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,  
For very life and nature we tack'd from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-  
race roared;  
But every tack we made we brought the North Head  
close aboard;  
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers  
running high,  
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass  
against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean  
foam;  
The good red fires were burning bright in every  
'longshore home;  
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys  
volley'd out;  
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went  
about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty  
jovial cheer;  
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days  
in the year)  
The day of our adversity was blessèd Christmas morn,  
And the house above the coastguard's was the house  
where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces  
there,  
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;

And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely  
elves  
Go dancing round the china plates that stand upon  
the shelves!

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was  
of me,  
Of the shadow on the household and the son that  
went to sea;  
And O the wicked fool I seem'd, in every kind of way,  
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd  
Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.  
'All hands to loose topgallant sails!' I heard the  
captain call.  
'By the Lord, she'll never stand it,' our first mate  
Jackson cried.  
. . . 'It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson,'  
he replied.

She stagger'd to her bearings, but the sails were new  
and good,  
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though  
she understood.  
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the  
night,  
We clear'd the weary headland, and passed below the  
light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on  
board but me,  
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out  
to sea;  
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the  
cold,  
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were  
growing old.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

FROM "ECHOES"

THE full sea rolls and thunders  
In glory and in glee.  
O, bury me not in the senseless earth  
But in the living sea!

Ay, bury me where it surges  
A thousand miles from shore,  
And in its brotherly unrest  
I'll range for evermore.

W. E. HENLEY.

SHIPS OF OLD RENOWN

TRIREMES of the Roman, cruising down to Antioch,  
Longships of the Northmen, galleons of Spain,  
Tall, gleaming caravels, swinging in the tideway,  
Never shall the sunlight gild their sails again.

Never shall those white sails, lifting on the sea-line,  
Swoop like a swallow across the blinding blue,  
Caracque and caravel, lying 'neath the waters,  
Wait till the bugles shall call the last review.

There in the darkness lie friend and foe together,  
Drake's English pinnaces, the great Armada's host;  
Quiet they lie in the silence of the sea-depths,  
Waiting the call that shall sound from coast to  
coast.

Warship and merchantmen, lying in the slime there,  
Galleys of the Algerine, and traders of Almayne,  
Hoys of the Dutchman, and haughty ships of Venice,  
Never shall the sunlight gild their sails again.

NORA HOLLAND.

### SEA-GULLS

WHERE the dark green hollows lift  
Into crests of snow,  
Wheeling, flashing, floating by,  
White against the stormy sky,  
With exultant call and cry  
Swift the sea-gulls go.

Fearless, vagabond and free  
Children of the spray,  
Spirits of old mariners  
Drifting down the restless years—

Drake's and Hawkins' buccaneers,  
So do seamen say.

Watching, guarding, sailing still  
Round the shores they knew,  
Where the cliffs of Devon rise  
Red against the sullen skies  
(Dearer far than Paradise),  
'Mid the tossing blue.

Not for them the heavenly song;  
Sweeter still they find  
Than those angels, row on row,  
Thunder of the bursting snow  
Seething on the rocks below,  
Singing of the wind.

Fairer than the streets of gold  
Those wild fields of foam,  
Where the horses of the sea  
Stamp and whinny ceaselessly,  
Warding from all enemy  
Shores they once called home.

So the sea-gulls call and cry  
'Neath the cliffs to-day,  
Spirits of old mariners  
Drifting down the restless years—  
Drake's and Hawkins' buccaneers—  
So do seamen say.

NORA HOLLAND.

## MESSMATES

He gave us all a goodbye cheerily

At the first dawn of day;

We dropped him down the side full drearily

When the light died away.

It's a dead dark watch that he's a-keeping there,

And a long, long night that lags a-creeping there,

Where the Trades and the tides roll over him

And the great ships go by.

He's there alone with green seas rocking him

For a thousand miles around;

He's there alone with dumb things mocking him,

And we're homeward bound.

It's a long, lone watch that he's a-keeping there,

And a dead cold night that lags a-creeping there,

While the months and the years roll over him

And the great ships go by.

I wonder if the tramps come near enough

As they thrash to and fro,

And the battle-ships' bells ring clear enough

To be heard down below;

If through all the lone watch that he's a-keeping there,

And the long, cold night that lags a-creeping there,

The voices of the sailor-men shall comfort him

When the great ships go by.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

## NEARING CAPE HORN

(From *Dauber*)

ALL through the windless night the clipper rolled  
In a great swell with oily gradual heaves  
Which rolled her down until the time-bells tolled  
Clang, and the weltering water moaned like bees,  
The thundering rattle of slatting shook the sheaves,  
Startles of water made the swing ports gush,  
The sea was moaning and sighing and saying "Hush!"

It was all black and starless. Peering down  
Into the water trying to pierce the gloom,  
One saw a dim, smooth, oily glitter of brown  
Heaving and dying away and leaving room  
For yet another. Like the march of doom  
Came those great powers of marching silences;  
Then fog came down, dead cold, and hid the seas.

They set the Dauber to the fog-horn. There  
He stood upon the poop, making to sound  
Out of the pump the sailors' nasal blare,  
Listening lest ice should make the note resound.  
She bayed there like a solitary hound  
Lost in a covert, all the watch she bayed;  
The fog, come closelier down, no answer made.

Denser it grew, until the ship was lost;  
The elemental hid her, she was merged  
In mufflings of dark death like a man's ghost  
New to the change of death, yet thither urged.  
Then from the hidden waters something surged  
Mournful, despairing, great, greater than speech,  
A noise like one slow wave on a still beach.

Mournful, and then again, mournful, and still  
Out of the night that mighty voice arose,  
The Dauber at his fog-horn felt the thrill:  
Who rode that desolate sea? What forms were those?  
Mournful, from things defeated, in the throes  
Of memory of some conquered hunting ground,  
Out of the night of death arose the sound.

"Whales," said the mate. They stayed there all  
night long,  
Answering the horn, out of the night they spoke,  
Defeated creatures who had suffered wrong  
But were still noble underneath the stroke.  
They filled the darkness when the Dauber woke;  
The men came peering to the rail to hear,  
And the sea sighed and the fog rose up sheer,

A wall of nothing at the world's last edge,  
Where no life came except defeated life.  
The Dauber felt shut in within a hedge  
Behind which form was hidden and thought was rife,  
And that a blinding flash, a thrust, a knife,

Would sweep the hedge away and make all plain,  
Brilliant beyond all words, blinding the brain.

So the night passed, but then no morning broke,  
Only a something shewed that night was dead,  
A sea-bird, cackling like a devil, spoke,  
And the fog drew away and hung like lead:  
Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and red,  
Like glowering gods at watch it did appear,  
And sometimes drew away and then drew near.

Like islands and like chasms and like hell,  
But always mighty and red, gloomy and ruddy,  
Shutting the visible sea in like a well,  
Slow-heaving in vast ripples blank and muddy  
Where the sun should have risen it streaked bloody;  
The day was still-born; all the sea-fowl scattering  
Splashed the still water, mewing, hovering, chattering.

Then Polar snow came down little and light,  
Till all the sky was hidden by the small,  
Most multitudinous drift of dirty white  
Tumbling and wavering down and covering all,  
Covering the sea, the sky, the clipper tall,  
Furring the ropes with white, casing the mast,  
Coming on no known air, but blowing past.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

PART III  
THE CALL OF THE COUNTRY



## PART III.—THE CALL OF THE COUNTRY

### WANDER-THIRST

BEYOND the East the Sunrise; beyond the West the  
sea;

And East and West the Wander-Thirst that will not  
let me be;

It works in me like madness to bid me say goodbye,  
For the seas call, and the stars call, and oh! the call  
of the sky!

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the  
blue hills are,

But a man can have the sun for friend, and for his  
guide a star;

And there's no end of voyaging when once the voice  
is heard,

For the rivers call, and the road calls, and oh! the  
call of a bird!

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night and  
day

The old ships draw to home again, the young ships  
sail away;

And come I may, but go I must, and if men ask you  
why,  
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun, and  
the white road and the sky.

GERALD GOULD.

### THE WINNOWERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs  
The little hamlet lies,  
And nothing sees but the bald crowns  
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent  
And grey slopes of the wold,  
The red roofs nestle, oversprent  
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun  
Basking, what time of year  
The thrush his singing has begun,  
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched  
His faggots on the stack:  
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched  
Sweet hay from crib and rack:

And from the barn hard by was borne  
A steady muffled din,  
By which we knew that threshèd corn  
Was winnowing, and went in.

The sunbeams on the motey air  
Streamed through the open door,  
And on the brown arms moving bare,  
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed  
The hopper, lest it lack,  
One in the bushel scoops the seed,  
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,  
And the awns fly in the draught;  
To see us both so pensive grown  
The honest labourers laughed:

Merry they were, because the wheat  
Was clean and plump and good,  
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet  
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,  
And had not gat us free  
In spirit from the store and stir  
Of its immensity:

But here we found ourselves again.  
Where humble harvests bring  
After much toil but little grain,  
'Tis merry winnowing.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

## THE VAGABOND

GIVE to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river—  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I seek, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree,  
Biting the blue finger.  
White as meal the frosty field—  
Warm the fireside haven—  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I ask, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

THEY shut the road through the woods  
Seventy years ago.  
Weather and rain have undone it again,  
And now you would never know  
There was once a road through the woods  
Before they planted the trees.  
It is underneath the coppice and heath,  
And the thin anemones.  
Only the keeper sees  
That, where the ring-dove broods,  
And the badgers roll at ease,  
There was once a way through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods  
Of a summer evening late,  
When the night air cools on the trout-ringed pools  
Where the otter whistles his mate,

(They fear not men in the woods,  
Because they see so few)  
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,  
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,  
Steadily cantering through  
The misty solitudes,  
As though they perfectly knew  
The old lost road through the woods . . .  
But there is no road through the woods!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

### THE ADVENTURERS

OVER the downs in sunlight clear  
Forth we went in the spring of the year:  
Plunder of April's gold we sought,  
Little of April's anger thought.

Caught in a copse without defence  
Low we crouched to the rain-squall dense:  
Sure, if misery man can vex,  
There it beat on our bended necks.

Yet when again we wander on  
Suddenly all that gloom is gone:  
Under and over through the wood,  
Life is astir, and life is good.

Violets purple, violets white,  
Delicate windflowers dancing light,

Primrose, mercury, moscatel,  
Shimmer in diamonds round the dell.

Squirrel is climbing swift and lithe,  
Chiff-chaff whetting his airy scythe,  
Woodpecker whirrs his rattling rap,  
Ringdove flies with a sudden clap.

Rook is summoning rook to build,  
Dunnock his beak with moss has filled,  
Robin is bowing in coat-tails brown,  
Tomtit chattering upside down.

Well is it seen that every one  
Laughs at the rain and loves the sun;  
We too laughed with the wildwood crew,  
Laughed till the sky once more was blue.

Homeward over the downs we went  
Soaked to the heart with sweet content;  
April's anger is swift to fall,  
April's wonder is worth it all.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

## THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;  
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the  
honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes  
dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the  
cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple  
glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the  
shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements  
gray,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

### IN ROMNEY MARSH

As I went down to Dymchurch Wall,  
I heard the South sing o'er the land;  
I saw the yellow sunlight fall  
On knolls where Norman churches stand.

And ringing shrilly, taut and lithe,  
Within the wind a core of sound,  
The wire from Romney town to Hythe  
Alone its airy journey wound.

A veil of purple vapour flowed  
And trailed its fringe along the Straits;  
The upper air like sapphire glow'd;  
And roses fill'd Heaven's central gates.

Masts in the offing wagg'd their tops;  
The swinging waves peal'd on the shore;  
The saffron beach, all diamond drops  
And beads of surge, prolong'd the roar.

As I came up from Dymchurch Wall,  
I saw above the Down's low crest  
The crimson brands of sunset fall,  
Flicker and fade from out the west.

Night sank: like flakes of silver fire  
The stars in one great shower came down;  
Shrill blew the wind; and shrill the wire  
Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

The darkly shining salt sea drops  
Streamed as the waves clashed on the shore;  
The beach, with all its organ stops  
Pealing again, prolong'd the roar.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

## THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:  
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,  
In early fall, when the wind walks, too;

A shadowy highway, cool and brown,  
Alluring up and enticing down.

From rippled water to dappled swamp,  
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

The outward eye, the quiet will,  
And the striding heart from hill to hill;

The tempter apple over the fence;  
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince;

The palish asters along the wood,—  
A lyric touch of the solitude;

An open hand, an easy shoe,  
And a hope to make the day go through,—

Another to sleep with, and a third  
To wake me up at the voice of a bird;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;  
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Who never defers and never demands,  
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands,—

Seeing it good as when God first saw  
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

And O the joy that is never won,  
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,  
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

The racy smell of the forest loam  
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;  
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release  
From the stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;  
And two brown arms at the journey's end!

These are the joys of the open road—  
For him who travels without a load.

BLISS CARMAN.



PART IV  
ANIMALS



## PART IV.—ANIMALS

ALL through the great literature of Europe, from the time when Homer sang of the faithfulness of Odysseus' dog Argus, and Hesiod of the happiness of the little cicada, one may find poems inspired by thoughts of living creatures. English literature abounds in such poems. Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Blake, Scott, Coleridge—to mention a few great names—all wrote some of their most beautiful work under the inspiration of this theme.

It is the same with modern poetry: hardly a living creature but has inspired some thought that has been expressed in beautiful verse. Yet in reading the many modern poems that have been written upon this subject one meets, as it were, a change of attitude—a definite striving to break through the great barrier of species, and enter in spirit into the strange world of dumb animals that lies so close to us, and is yet so infinitely far away.

This change of attitude may perhaps be expressed in the order in which the following poems have been arranged. First there is the point of view of the hunter, in which the tragedy of the hunted finds no

place—the joy of the sport-instinct excluding all such thought. Next, in the wonderful poem *A Runnable Stag*, the outlook is modified. For through all its freshness and enthusiasm, the very music of the Hunt, the amazingly subtle effect of the constant repetition of “the stag, the stag,” one feels that the whole inspiration of the poem lies in the dignity and splendour of the stag himself, unconquered even in death.

Next, the poet is an observer of nature—a lover of animals. And this love of animals prompts strange and beautiful questionings, as in the verses *To a Favourite Cat*.

Then the thought goes deeper, and one is made to realise the tragedy of animal life, that fails to understand, and yet can feel. Such a poem is *The Bull*, which with all its pathos and gorgeous imagery is far more than the mere story of a bull. There is an indignant appeal for understanding in such poems as *The Bells of Heaven*—of sympathy for “tamed and shabby tigers” and “little hunted hares”; there is a cry of pity in *The Snare*; and in Rupert Brooke’s wonderful poem *The Fish*, an attempt to visualise for us the outlook of a living creature infinitely removed from us in thought and conditions.

In a single phrase, sympathetic insight is the keynote of modern poetry written upon the theme of Animals.

## THE OLD SQUIRE

I LIKE the hunting of the hare  
Better than that of the fox;  
I like the joyous morning air,  
And the crowing of the cocks.

I like the calm of the early fields,  
The ducks asleep by the lake,  
The quiet hour which Nature yields,  
Before mankind is awake.

I like the pheasants and feeding things  
Of the unsuspecting morn;  
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings  
As she rises from the corn.

I like the blackbird's shriek, and his rush  
From the turnips as I pass by,  
And the partridge hiding her head in a bush,  
For her young ones cannot fly.

I like these things, and I like to ride  
When all the world is in bed,  
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide,  
And where the sun grows red.

The beagles at my horse heels trot  
In silence after me;  
There's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,  
Old Slut and Margery,—

A score of names well used, and dear,  
The names my childhood knew;  
The horn, with which I rouse their cheer,  
Is the horn my father blew.

I like the hunting of the hare  
Better than that of the fox;  
The new world still is all less fair  
Than the old world it mocks.

I covet not a wider range  
Than these dear manors give;  
I take my pleasure without change,  
And as I lived I live.

I leave my neighbours to their thought;  
My choice it is, and pride,  
On my own lands to find my sport,  
In my own fields to ride.

The hare herself no better loves  
The field where she was bred,  
Than I the habit of these groves,  
My own inherited.

I know my quarries every one,  
The meuse where she sits low;  
The road she chose to-day was run  
A hundred years ago.

The lags, the gills, the forest ways,  
The hedgerows one and all,  
These are the kingdoms of my chase,  
And bounded by my wall;

Nor has the world a better thing,  
Though one should search it round,  
Than thus to live one's own sole king,  
Upon one's own sole ground.

I like the hunting of the hare;  
It brings me, day by day,  
The memory of old days as fair,  
With dead men past away.

To these, as homeward still I ply,  
And pass the churchyard gate  
Where all are laid as I must lie,  
I stop and raise my hat.

I like the hunting of the hare;  
New sports I hold in scorn.  
I like to be as my fathers were,  
In the days ere I was born.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT.

## MASTER AND MAN

Do ye ken hoo to fush for the salmon?  
If ye'll listen I'll tell ye.  
Dinna trust to the books and their gammon,  
They're but trying to sell ye.  
Leave professors to read their ain cackle  
And fush their ain style;  
Come awa', sir, we'll oot wi' oor tackle  
And be busy the while.

'Tis a wee bit ower bright, ye were thinkin'?  
Aw, ye'll no be the loser;  
'Tis better ten baskin' and blinkin'  
Than ane that's a cruiser.  
If ye're bent, as I tak it, on slatter,  
Ye should pray for the droot,  
For the salmon's her ain when there's watter,  
But she's oors when it's oot.

Ye may just put your flee-hook behind ye,  
Ane hook wull be plenty;  
If they'll no come for this, my man, mind ye,  
They'll no come for twenty.  
Ay, a rod; but the shorter the stranger  
And the nearer to strike;  
For myself I prefare it nae langer  
Than a yard or the like.

Noo, ye'll stand awa' back while I'm creepin',  
Wi' my snoot i' the gowans;  
There's a bonny twelve-poonder a-sleepin'  
I' the shade o' yon rowans.  
Man, man! I was fearin' I'd stirred her,  
But I've got her the noo!  
Hoot! fushin's as easy as murrder  
When ye ken what to do.

Na, na, sir, I doot na ye're willin'  
But I canna permit ye;  
For I'm thinkin' that yon kind o' killin'  
Wad hardly befit ye.  
And some work is deefferent hushin',  
There'd be havers and chaff:  
'Twull be best, sir, for you to be fushin'  
And me wi' the gaff.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

### A RUNNABLE STAG

WHEN the pods went pop on the broom, green broom,  
And apples began to be golden-skin'd,  
We harbour'd a stag in the Priory coomb,  
And we feather'd his trail up-wind, up-wind,  
We feather'd his trail up-wind—  
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,  
A runnable stag, a kingly crop,  
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,  
A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,  
And ' Forwards ' we heard the harbourer shout;  
But 'twas only a brocket that broke a gap  
In the beechen underwood, driven out,  
From the underwood antler'd out  
By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,  
The runnable stag, whose lordly mind  
Was bent on sleep, though beam'd and tined  
He stood, a runnable stag.

So we tufted the covert till afternoon  
With Tinkerman's Pup and Bell-of-the-North;  
And hunters were sulky and hounds out of tune  
Before we tufted the right stag forth,  
Before we tufted him forth,  
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,  
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,  
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,  
The royal and runnable stag.

It was Bell-of-the-North and Tinkerman's Pup  
That stuck to the scent till the copse was drawn.  
' Tally ho! Tally ho! ' and the hunt was up,  
The tufters whipp'd, and the pack laid on,  
The resolute pack laid on,  
And the stag of warrant away at last,  
The runnable stag, the same, the same,  
His hoofs on fire, his horns like flame,  
A stag, a runnable stag.

' Let your gelding be: if you check or chide  
He stumbles at once and you're out of the hunt;  
For three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,  
On hunters accustom'd to bear the brunt,  
Accustom'd to bear the brunt,  
Are after the runnable stag, the stag,  
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,  
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,  
The right, the runnable stag.'

By perilous paths in coomb and dell,  
The heather, the rocks, and the river-bed,  
The pace grew hot, for the scent lay well,  
And a runnable stag goes right ahead,  
The quarry went right ahead—  
Ahead, ahead, and fast and far;  
His antler'd crest, his cloven hoof,  
Brow, bay and tray and three aloof,  
The stag, the runnable stag.

For a matter of twenty miles and more  
By the densest hedge and the highest wall,  
Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore  
Of harbourer, huntsman, hounds and all,  
Of harbourer, hounds and all—  
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,  
For twenty miles, and five and five,  
He ran, and he never was caught alive,  
This stag, this runnable stag.

When he turn'd at bay in the leafy gloom,  
In the emerald gloom where the brook ran deep,  
He heard in the distance the rollers boom,  
And he saw in a vision of peaceful sleep  
In a wonderful vision of sleep,  
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,  
A runnable stag in a jewell'd bed,  
Under the sheltering ocean dead,  
A stag, a runnable stag.

So a fateful hope lit up his eye,  
And he open'd his nostrils wide again,  
And he toss'd his branching antlers high  
As he headed the hunt down the Charlock glen,  
As he raced down the echoing glen—  
For five miles more, the stag, the stag,  
For twenty miles, and five and five,  
Not to be caught now, dead or alive,  
The stag, the runnable stag.

Three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,  
Three hundred horses as gallant and free,  
Beheld him escape on the evening tide,  
Far out till he sank in the Severn Sea,  
Till he sank in the depths of the sea—  
The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag  
That slept at last in a jewell'd bed  
Under the sheltering ocean spread,  
The stag, the runnable stag.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

## ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

TO-DAY, all day, I rode upon the down,  
With hounds and horsemen, a brave company,  
On this side in its glory lay the sea,  
On that side Sussex weald, a sea of brown.  
The wind was light, and brightly the sun shone,  
And still we galloped on from gorse to gorse:  
And once, when checked, a thrush sang, and my horse  
Pricked his quick ears as to a sound unknown.

I knew the Spring was come. I knew it even  
Better than all by this, that through my chase  
In bush and stone and hill and sea and heaven  
I seemed to see and follow still your face.  
Your face my quarry was. For it I rode,  
My horse a thing of wings, myself a god.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT.

## TO A FAVOURITE CAT

I TOOK my beautiful puss to-day  
(Sleek and fluffy and bland was she),  
And set her down on the hearth to play  
(Beloved as only a cat may be).

My hand would tickle her velvet paws  
(Black and velvety paws had she)

And toy with the innocent-seeming claws,  
Sheathed as only a cat's may be.

Soft and deep was her coat so bright  
(Deep and soft, like a starless sea);  
And her eyes were lit with a far, strange light—  
Mystic, subtle, with love for me.

So I fell to wondering (as she lay  
Close to the fire as a cat may be)  
If, centuries since, we twain were one,  
Lit with hopes of the days to be.

Perhaps: who knows? Yet if such be true  
(Whisper the secret, Fluff, to me!)  
Much would it help me comprehend  
That haunting flame in the eyes of thee.

Perchance, by shores of some deep lagoon,  
Thy face met mine—as it now meets me;  
By Nilus' banks, 'neath an Afric moon,  
I told my love—as I now tell thee.

It may be, Sweet, that I stroked thy hand  
Softly, as now I am stroking thee,  
When our lives were free as the desert sand—  
A couple of thousand years B.C.

EDWARD HENRY BLAKENEY.

## THE BULL

SEE an old unhappy bull,  
Sick in soul and body both,  
Slouching in the undergrowth  
Of the forest beautiful,  
Banished from the herd he led,  
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go  
Up and down the burning sky;  
Tree-top cats purr drowsily  
In the dim-day green below;  
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,  
All disputing, go and come;

And things abominable sit  
Picking offal buck or swine,  
On the mess and over it  
Burnished flies and beetles shine,  
And spiders big as bladders lie  
Under hemlocks ten foot high.

And a dotted serpent curled  
Round and round and round a tree,  
Yellowing its greenery,  
Keeps a watch on all the world,  
All the world and this old bull  
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:  
One he led, a bull of blood  
Newly come to lustihood,  
Fought and put his prince to shame,  
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head  
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,  
Left him there without a lick,  
Left him for the birds to pick,  
Left him there for carrion,  
Vilely from their bosom cast  
Wisdom, worth and love at last.

When the lion left his lair  
And roared his beauty through the hills,  
And the vultures pecked their quills  
And flew into the middle air,  
Then this prince no more to reign  
Came to life and lived again.

He snuffed the herd in far retreat,  
He saw the blood upon the ground,  
And snuffed the burning airs around  
Still with beevish odours sweet,  
While the blood ran down his head  
And his mouth ran slaver red.

Pity him, this fallen chief,  
All his splendour, all his strength,

All his body's breadth and length  
Dwindled down with shame and grief,  
Half the bull he was before,  
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep  
In the rushes at the lake,  
Surly, stupid, half asleep,  
Waiting for his heart to break  
And the birds to join the flies  
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes;

Standing with his head hung down  
In a stupor, dreaming things:  
Green savannas, jungles brown,  
Battlefields and bellowings,  
Bulls undone and lions dead,  
And vultures flapping overhead.

Dreaming things: of days he spent  
With his mother gaunt and lean  
In the valley warm and green,  
Full of baby wonderment,  
Blinking out of silly eyes  
At a hundred mysteries;

Dreaming over once again  
How he wandered with a throng  
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,  
Wandered on from plain to plain,

Up the hill and down the dale,  
Always at his mother's tail;

How he lagged behind the herd,  
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,  
And she turned and ran to him  
Blaring at the loathly bird  
Stationed always in the skies  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day  
When her drained and drying paps  
Turned him to the sweets and saps,  
Richer fountains by the way,  
And she left the bull she bore  
And he looked to her no more;

And his little frame grew stout,  
And his little legs grew strong,  
And the way was not so long;  
And his little horns came out,  
And he played at butting trees,  
And boulder-stones and tortoises,

Joined a game of knobby skulls  
With the youngsters of his year,  
All the other little bulls  
Learning both to bruise and bear,  
Learning how to stand a shock  
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,  
Dreaming of a time less far,  
When the faint but certain star  
Of destiny burned clear for him,  
And a fierce and wild unrest  
Broke the quiet of his breast,

And the gristles of his youth  
Hardened in his comely pow,  
And he came to fighting growth,  
Beat his bull and won his cow,  
And flew his tail and trampled off  
Past the tallest, vain enough,

And curved about in splendour full  
And curved again and snuffed the airs  
As who should say Come out who dares!  
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,  
And knew that here was surely one  
That backed for no bull, fearing none.

And the leader of the herd  
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,  
And shook the forest with his sound,  
Bellowed at the loathly bird  
Stationed always in the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn  
Surely dreaming of the hour

When he came to sultan-power,  
And they owned him master-horn,  
Chiefest bull of all among  
Bulls and cows a thousand strong;

And in all the tramping herd  
Not a bull that barred his way,  
Not a cow that said him nay,  
Not a bull or cow that erred  
In the furnace of his look  
Dared a second, worse rebuke;

Not in all the forest wide,  
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,  
Not another dared him then,  
Dared him and again defied;  
Not a sovereign buck or boar  
Came a second time for more;

Not a serpent that survived  
Once the terrors of his hoof  
Risked a second time reproof,  
Came a second time and lived,  
Not a serpent in its skin  
Came again for discipline;

Not a leopard bright as flame  
Flashing fingerhooks of steel  
That a wooden tree might feel,  
Met his fury once and came

For a second reprimand,  
Not a leopard in the land;

Not a lion of them all,  
Not a lion of the hills,  
Hero of a thousand kills,  
Dared a second fight and fall,  
Dared that ram terrific twice,  
Paid a second time the price.

Pity him, this dupe of dream,  
Leader of the herd again  
Only in his daft old brain,  
Once again the bull supreme  
And bull enough to bear the part  
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;  
Even now the swarm of flies  
Blackening his bloodshot eyes  
Bursts and blusters round the lake,  
Scattered from the feast half-fed,  
By great shadows overhead;

And the dreamer turns away  
From his visionary herds  
And his splendid yesterday,  
Turns to meet the loathly birds  
Flocking round him from the skies  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

RALPH HODGSON.

## BÊTE HUMAINE

RIDING through Ruwu swamp about sunrise  
I saw the world awake; and as the ray  
Touched the tall grasses where they dream till day,  
Lo, the bright air alive with dragon-flies:  
With brittle wings a-quiver, and great eyes  
Piloting crimson bodies, slender and gay.  
I aimed at one, and struck it, and it lay  
Broken and piteous, with fast-fading dyes.  
Then my soul sickened with a sudden pain  
And horror at my own careless cruelty,  
That, where all things were cruel, I had slain  
A creature whose sweet life it is to fly:  
Like beasts that prey with bloody claw . . . Nay, they  
Must slay to live, but what excuse had I?

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG.

## THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'TWOULD ring the bells of Heaven  
The wildest peal for years,  
If Parson lost his senses  
And people came to theirs,  
And he and they together  
Knelt down with angry prayers

For tamed and shabby tigers  
And dancing dogs and bears,  
And wretched, blind pit ponies,  
And little hunted hares.

RALPH HODGSON.

### THE SNARE

I HEAR a sudden cry of pain!  
There is a rabbit in a snare:  
Now I hear the cry again  
But I cannot tell from where.

But I cannot tell from where  
He is calling out for aid;  
Crying on the frightened air,  
Making everything afraid.

Making everything afraid,  
Wrinkling up his little face,  
As he cries again for aid;  
And I cannot find the place!

And I cannot find the place  
Where his paw is in the snare:  
Little one! Oh, little one!  
I am searching everywhere!

JAMES STEPHENS.

## ANIMALS

I THINK I could turn and live with animals, they are  
so placid and self-contain'd;  
I stand and look at them long and long.  
They do not sweat and whine about their condition;  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their  
sins;  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to  
God;  
Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the  
mania of owning things;  
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived  
thousands of years ago;  
Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole  
earth.

WALT WHITMAN.

## THE FISH

IN a cool curving world he lies  
And ripples with dark ecstasies.  
The kind luxurious lapse and steal  
Shapes all his universe to feel  
And know and be; the clinging stream  
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,  
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides  
Superb on unreturning tides.

Those silent waters weave for him  
A fluctuant mutable world and dim,  
Where wavering masses bulge and gape  
Mysterious, and shape to shape  
Dies momentarily through whorl and hollow,  
And form and line and solid follow  
Solid and line and form to dream  
Fantastic down the eternal stream;  
An obscure world, a shifting world,  
Bulbous, or pulled to thin, or curled,  
Or serpentine, or driving arrows,  
Or serene slidings, or March narrows.  
There slipping wave and shore are one,  
And weed and mud. No ray of sun,  
But glow to glow fades down the deep  
(As dream to unknown dream in sleep);  
Shaken translucency illumines  
The hyaline of drifting glooms;  
The strange soft-handed depth subdues  
Drowned colour there, but black to hues,  
As death to living, decomposes—  
Red darkness of the heart of roses,  
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,  
And gold that lies behind the eyes,  
The unknown unnameable sightless white  
That is the essential flame of night,  
Lustreless purple, hooded green,  
The myriad hues that lie between  
Darkness and Darkness! . . .

And all's one,

Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,  
The world he rests in, world he knows,  
Perpetual curving. Only—grows  
An eddy in that ordered falling,  
A knowledge from the gloom, a calling  
Weed in the wave, gleam in the mud—  
The dark fire leaps along his blood;  
Dateless and deathless, blind and still,  
The intricate impulse works its will;  
His woven world drops back; and he,  
Sans providence, sans memory,  
Unconscious and directly driven  
Fades to some dank sufficient heaven.

RUPERT BROOKE.

## DOG

You little friend, your nose is ready; you sniff  
Asking for that expected walk,  
(Your nostrils full of the happy rabbit-whiff)  
And almost talk.

And so the moment becomes a moving force:  
Coats glide from their pegs in the humble dark;  
The sticks grow live to the stride of their vagrant  
course.

You scamper the stairs,

Your body informed with the scent and the track  
and the mark

Of stoats and weasels, moles and badgers and hares.

We are going *out*. You know the pitch of the word,  
Probing the tone of thought as it comes through fog  
And reaches by devious means (half-smelt, half-heard)  
The four-legged brain of a walk-intensive dog.

Out in the garden your head is already low.

(Can you smell the rose? Ah, no.)

But your limbs can draw

Life from the earth through the touch of your padded  
paw.

Now, sending a little look to us behind,  
Who follow slowly the track of your lovely play,  
You carry our bodies forward away from mind  
Into the light and fun of your useless day.

. . . . .

Thus, for your walk, we took ourselves, and went  
Out by the hedge and the tree and on to the green.  
You ran, in delightful strata of wafted scent,  
Over the hill without seeing the view;  
Beauty is smell upon primitive smell to you:  
To you, as to us, it is distant and rarely seen.

Home . . . and further joy will be surely there:  
Supper waiting full of the taste of bone.

You throw up your nose again, and sniff, and stare  
For the habit known  
Of the quick wild gorge of food and the still lie-down,  
While your people talk above you in the light  
Of candles, and your dreams will merge and drown  
Into the bed-delicious hours of night.

HAROLD MONRO.

PART V  
THE GREAT WAR



## PART V.—THE GREAT WAR

It is necessary to say a word or two on the subject of war-poetry. A great deal of poetry has been written on this stupendous theme, some of it very good, and all of it significant. Yet it is probable that the great poet of the war has yet to arise, for a cataclysm so vast and overwhelming baffles grasp, and seems to lie beyond expression.

These poems have been written either by men who have seen modern war and tried to seize something tangible amid its awful complexity, or by those who have had to stay behind and bear the strain of suspense and anxiety. The result has been not a vast epic or drama, but a great number of telling scenes, significant thoughts, like flashes in the great dark chaos. These war-thoughts are often expressed in verse of extreme simplicity; and this is especially so when the writers have themselves looked death and horror straight in the eyes; for to them the thing seen or the thought inspired is too poignant in itself to bear any elaboration. One might compare such poems with Mr. Nevinson's famous picture *The Machine-Gun*, which depicts not merely three French soldiers in a trench, working a machine-gun, but

the whole of modern war expressed as a terrible engine or system for killing men.

These war-poems express innumerable points of view or attitudes of mind, of which a few are here given. There is the terrific power of subjective expression in *The Assault*; the terrible simplicity of *The Messages*; the yearning sadness and bewilderment of the poem called *Clouds*; the calm public-school spirit of *The Cricketers of Flanders*; the rugged force of *The Bushrangers*; the poignant bitterness of *The Attack*; the majesty of thought in *The Song of the Soldiers*; the joy of manhood in the battle poem by Captain Julian Grenfell. And these are but a few taken from a great multitude of war-poems, each written with a power and conviction of its own, like colour-notes in an artist's sketch-book.

Whether the war-poetry is destined to live, it is not yet possible to say. All one can be sure of is this: that when time has dimmed the memory of these terrible years, the thoughts of the men who fought, and of those who worked and waited at home, will be found embodied in these poems by those who care to read. No statues, nor pictures, nor novels will put those thoughts so intimately and vividly before us.

## MEN WHO MARCH AWAY

(SONG OF THE SOLDIERS)

WHAT of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here could win us;  
What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye,  
Who watch us stepping by  
With doubt and dolorous sigh?  
Can much pondering so hoodwink you!  
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye?

Nay, we well see what we are doing  
Though some may not see,  
Dalliers as they be;  
England's need are we;  
Her distress would leave us rueing:  
Nay. We well see what we are doing  
Though some may not see!

In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just,  
And that braggarts must

Surely bite the dust,  
Press we to the field ungrieving,  
In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here could win us;  
Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away.

*5th Sept. 1914.*

THOMAS HARDY.

### HIT

OUT of the sparkling sea  
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay  
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,  
Basking, and watching lazily  
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn  
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and  
through  
Till every particle glowed clean and new  
And slowly seemed to turn  
To lucent amber in a world of blue. . . .

I felt a sudden wrench—  
A trickle of warm blood—  
And found that I was sprawling in the mud  
Among the dead men in the trench.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON.

## THE MESSAGES

"I CANNOT quite remember. . . . There were five  
Dropt dead beside me in the trench—and three  
Whispered their dying messages to me. . . ."

Back from the trenches, more dead than alive,  
Stone-deaf and dazed, and with a broken knee  
He hobbled slowly, muttering vacantly:

"I cannot quite remember. . . . There were five  
Dropt dead beside me in the trench—and three  
Whispered their dying messages to me. . . ."

"Their friends are waiting, wondering how they  
thrive—

Waiting a word in silence patiently . . .  
But what they said, or who their friends may be

"I cannot quite remember. . . . There were five  
Dropt dead beside me in the trench—and three  
Whispered their dying messages to me. . . ."

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON.

## THE ASSAULT

THE beating of the guns grows louder.

*"Not long, boys, now."*

My heart burns whiter, fearfuller, prouder.

Hurricanes grow

As guns redouble their fire.

Through the shaken periscope peeping,

I glimpse their wire:

Black earth, fountains of earth rise, leaping,

Spouting like shocks of meeting waves,

Death's fountains are playing,

Shells like shrieking birds rush over;

Crash and din rises higher.

A stream of lead raves

Over us from the left . . . (We safe under cover!).

Crash! Reverberation! Crash!

Acrid smoke billowing. Flash upon flash.

Black smoke drifting. The German line

Vanishes in confusion, smoke. Cries, and cry

Of our men, *"Gah, yer swine!"*

*Ye're for it,"* die

In a hurricane of shell.

One cry:

*"We're comin' soon! look out!"*

There is opened hell

Over there; fragments fly,

Rifles and bits of men whirled at the sky:

Dust, smoke, thunder! A sudden bout  
Of machine guns chattering . . .  
And redoubled battering,  
As if in fury at their daring! . . .

No good staring.

Time soon now . . . home . . . house on a sunny  
hill . . .

Gone like a flickered page:

Time soon now . . . zero . . . will engage . . .

A sudden thrill—

“ Fix bayonets! ”

Gods! we have our fill

Of fear, hysteria, exultation, rage,

Rage to kill.

My heart burns hot, whiter and whiter,

Contracts tighter and tighter,

Until I stifle with the will

Long forged, now used

(Though utterly strained)—

O pounding heart,

Baffled, confused,

Heart panged, head singing, dizzily pained—

To do my part.

Blindness a moment. Sick.

There the men are!

Bayonets ready: click!

Time goes quick;

A stumbled prayer . . . somehow a blazing star

In a blue night . . . where?

Again prayer.

The tongue trips. Start:

How's time? Soon now. Two minutes or less.

The guns' fury mounting higher . . .

Their utmost. I lift a silent hand. Unseen I  
bless

Those hearts will follow me.

And beautifully

Now beautifully my will grips,

Soul calm and round and filmed and white!

A shout: "Men, no such order as retire!"

I nod.

The whistle's 'twixt my lips . . .

I catch

A wan, worn smile at me.

Dear men!

The pale wrist-watch . . .

The quiet hand ticks on amid the din.

The guns again

Rise to a last fury, to a rage, a lust:

Kill! Pound! Kill! Pound! Pound!

Now comes the thrust!

My part . . . dizziness . . . will . . . but trust

These men. The great guns rise;

Their fury seems to burst the earth and skies!

They lift.

Gather, heart, all thoughts that drift;  
Be steel, soul,  
Compress thyself  
Into a round bright whole.  
I cannot speak.

Time. Time!

I hear my whistle shriek,  
Between teeth set;  
I fling an arm up,  
Scramble up the grime  
Over the parapet!  
I'm up. Go on.  
Something meets us.  
Head down into the storm that greets us.  
A wail.

Lights. Blurr. .

Gone.

On, on. Lead. Leād. Hail.

Spatter. Whirr! Whirr!

*"Toward that patch of brown ;  
Direction left."* Bullets a stream.

Devouring thought crying in a dream.

Men, crumpled, going down . . .

Go on. Go.

Deafness. Numbness. The loudening tornado.

Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.

My voice's strangled shout:

*"Steady pace, boys !"*

The still light: gladness.

*"Look, sir. Look out!"*

Ha! ha! Bunched figures waiting.

Revolver levelled quick!

Flick! Flick!

Red as blood.

Germans. Germans.

Good! O good!

Cool madness.

ROBERT NICHOLS.

### THE BUSHRANGERS

As I was walking down Oxford Street

Ten fierce soldiers I chanced to meet,

They wore big slouch hats and khaki sashes,

And talked like the angry guns, in flashes.

And my friend said to me, "They come from  
Australia;

Villainous fellows for War's regalia.

John Briton keeps a tobacconist's shed

And twice they have held a gun at his head."

Well, I would have given all I had

To have gone with the bunch of them, good or bad,

To have heard the wickedest say, "Old fellow!"

And staunched his wounds where the black guns  
bellow.

I'd have thought it a merry thing to die  
With such stalwart comrades standing by.

One of them had round eyes like coals—  
True parson's quarry when he hunts souls.  
The brawniest made my heart turn queer;  
The devil in hell would have shunned his leer.  
And the tallest and thinnest bore visible traces  
Of his banished grandsire's vanished graces.

But all the lot of that swaggering ten  
Were terrible, fine, strong soldier men;  
And I fairly sobbed at the four cross ways  
As my triumphing soul sang England's praise.

O! all the Germans in Berlin town  
Couldn't put those ten Australians down.

HERBERT E. PALMER.

## X ATTACK

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun  
In the wild purple of the glowering sun,  
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that  
shroud

The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,  
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.  
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed  
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,

Men jostle and climb to meet the bristling fire.  
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,  
They leave their trenches, going over the top,  
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,  
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,  
Flounders in mud. O Jesu, make it stop!

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

## THE CRICKETERS OF FLANDERS

THE first to climb the parapet  
With 'cricket-ball' in either hand;  
The first to vanish in the smoke  
Of God-forsaken No-Man's land.  
First at the wire and soonest through,  
First at those red-mouthed hounds of hell  
The Maxims, and the first to fall,—  
They do their bit, and do it well.

Full sixty yards I've seen them throw  
With all that nicety of aim  
They learned on British cricket-fields.  
Ah! bombing is a Briton's game!  
Shell-hole to shell-hole, trench to trench,  
"Lobbing them over," with an eye  
As true as though it *were* a game,  
And friends were having tea close by.

Pull down some art-offending thing  
Of carven stone, and in its stead  
Let splendid bronze commemorate  
These men, the living and the dead.  
No figure of heroic size  
Towering skyward like a god;  
But just a lad who might have stepped  
From any British bombing squad.

His shrapnel helmet set a-tilt,  
His bombing waistcoat sagging low,  
His rifle slung across his back:  
Poised in the very act to throw.  
And let some graven legend tell  
Of those weird battles in the West  
Wherein he put old skill to use  
And played old games with sterner zest.

Thus should he stand, reminding those  
In less believing days, perchance,  
How Britain's fighting cricketers  
Helped bomb the Germans out of France.  
And other eyes than ours would see;  
And other hearts than ours would thrill,  
And others say, as we have said:  
"A sportsman and a soldier still!"

ANONYMOUS.

## INTO BATTLE

THE naked earth is warm with Spring,  
And with green grass and bursting trees  
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,  
And quivers in the sunny breeze;  
And life is Colour and Warmth and Light,  
And a striving evermore for these;  
And he is dead who will not fight,  
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun  
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;  
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,  
And with the trees to newer birth;  
And find, when fighting shall be done,  
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven  
Hold him in their high comradeship,  
The Dog-star, and the Sisters Seven,  
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together  
They stand to him each one a friend;  
They gently speak in the windy weather;  
They guide to valley and ridge's end.

The kestrel hovering by day  
And the little owls that call by night,

Bid him be swift and keen as they,  
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, " Brother, brother,  
If this be the last song you shall sing  
Sing well, for you may not sing another;  
Brother, sing."

In dreary doubtful waiting hours,  
Before the brazen frenzy starts,  
The horses show him nobler powers;—  
O patient eyes; courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,  
And all things else are out of mind,  
And only Joy of Battle takes  
Him by the throat and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,  
Not caring much to know, that still  
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so  
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,  
And in the air Death moans and sings;  
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,  
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

JULIAN GRENFELL.

(Captain the Hon. Julian Grenfell, D.S.O., was wounded at Ypres, 13th May, and died at Boulogne 26th May, 1915.)



## YEARS AHEAD

YEARS ahead, years ahead,  
Who shall honour our sailor-dead?  
For the wild North Sea, the bleak North Sea,  
Threshes and seethes so endlessly.  
Gathering foam and changing crest  
Heave and hurry, and know no rest:  
How can they mark our sailor-dead  
In the years ahead?

Time goes by, time goes by,  
And who shall tell where our soldiers lie?  
The guiding trench-cut winds afar,  
Miles upon miles where the dead men are;  
A cross of wood, or a carven block,  
A name-disc hung on a rifle-stock—  
These shall tell where our soldiers lie  
As the time goes by.

Days to come, days to come—  
But who shall ask of the wandering foam,  
The weaving weed, or the rocking swell,  
The place of our sailor-dead to tell?  
From Jutland reefs to Scapa Flow  
Tracks of the wary warships go,  
But the deep sea-wastes lie green and dumb  
All the days to come.

Years ahead, years ahead,  
The sea shall honour our sailor-dead!  
No mound of mouldering earth shall show  
The fighting place of the men below,  
But a swirl of seas that gather and spill;  
And the wind's wild chanty whistling shrill  
Shall cry "Consider my sailor-dead!"  
In the years ahead.

GUY N. POCOCK.

## CLOUDS

BECAUSE a million voices call  
Across the earth distractedly,  
Because the thrones of reason fall  
And beautiful battalions die,  
My mind is like a madrigal  
Played on a lute long since put by.

In common use my mind is still  
Eager for every lovely thing—  
The solitudes of tarn and hill,  
Bright birds with honesty to sing,  
Bluebells and primroses that spill  
Cascades of colour on the spring.

But now my mind that gave to these  
Gesture and shape, colour and song,

Goes hesitant and ill at ease,  
And the old touch is truant long,  
Because the continents and seas  
Are loud with lamentable wrong.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

### THE WINGING SOULS

WHEN good men's bodies die, their souls go winging  
To God: go winging and singing  
Through space. And God, smiling but august,  
From heav'n, of angels sends a little throng  
To meet the happy souls so newly freed from dust—  
To greet the happy souls singing their song.

In bed I lay one night wakefully thinking  
Of France: lay thinking, and shrinking  
From Death. I saw smitten, and wet with Death,  
A thousand men of Britain—brothers, sons.  
Twisted and torn were they, their latest breath  
A cry crushed by the thunder of the guns.

Foulness below . . . But up above?  
O, up above was Love . . .  
I saw a thousand souls  
Winging to God.  
He met them on Heav'n's stair  
And took them in His care.

Heav'n's corridors and ways  
Are open to them all their days.  
And as I fell on sleep I heard their winging,  
And as I woke this morn I heard their singing.

GERALD CUMBERLAND.

## THE DEAD FOX HUNTER

WE found the little captain at the head;  
His men lay well aligned.  
We touched his hand—stone cold—and he was dead,  
And they, all dead behind,  
Had never reached their goal, but they died well;  
They charged in line, and in the same line fell.

The well-known rosy colours of his face  
Were almost lost in grey.  
We saw that, dying and in hopeless case,  
For others' sake that day  
He'd smothered all rebellious groans: in death  
His fingers were tight clenched between his teeth.

For those who live uprightly and die true  
Heaven has no bars or locks,  
And serves all taste . . . Or what's for him to do  
Up there but hunt the fox?  
Angelic choirs? No, Justice must provide  
For one who rode straight and at hunting died.

So if Heaven had no Hunt before he came,  
Why it must find one now:  
If any shirk and doubt they know the game,  
There's one to teach them how:  
And the whole host of Seraphim complete  
Must jog in scarlet to his opening Meet.

ROBERT GRAVES.

PART VI

FANCY



## PART VI.—FANCY

### OR, POETRY FOR POETRY'S SAKE

WHEN we read poetry there are certain questions that naturally enter our minds, and seem to call for an answer. What *is* poetry, and what is it for? Why do we read it, and why did the poets write it?

Well, these are big questions; but the answers, in brief, are not hard to find. We read poetry to enjoy it—because it adds another delight to life, for those who have ears to hear. And the poets write it because they have a keener imaginative insight into the real significance of things than most men; and besides this they are able to use words in such wonderful fashion as to conjure up for us a sense of beauty or power, the existence of which we had not suspected, or only vaguely, ‘at the back of our minds.’ This, primarily, is what poetry is ‘for.’

But a poem need not necessarily tell a story, like *Enoch Arden*; nor arouse patriotic zeal, as in *Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled*; nor paint a scene with wonderful words; nor call forth our pity or anger. It *may* do all these things, and more. But there is something else it can do. It can transport us into another world—a world outside Space and Time altogether.

This world of Fancy, and Romance, and Imagination lies all around us and quite close to us, but it is often just out of reach until the poet supplies the key. As a child one did not have to bother about 'getting there': one turned the table upside-down—and it was a magic ship, sailing in fancy to ports and countries, real or unreal. But the conventionalities of life naturally dim one's imagination as one grows older; and then if we would escape from the humdrum world of facts, we must let the poets—who have never lost the children's secret—show us the way in.

The people who inhabit this world are not real people; they need not think or act like real people; and the scenes need not be very like anything we know in experience. It is all a blend between what the poet had in his own mind, and what he stimulates in ours when we read as poetically as we can. And then our experience of this world of Fancy is real enough.

Take the first poem, *From "Arabian Nights Entertainments."* Here the poet tells how as a boy he was transformed and transported by the magic of a book—and he transports us too, by the magic of his words. In the second poem, *Fallen Cities*, it is a little heap of sand that opens the gates of the past. And in such poems as *Off the Ground* we are danced right out of the normal world, and move in realms that lie beyond experience.

FROM "ARABIAN NIGHTS  
ENTERTAINMENTS"

(The poet recalls his wonder at reading the *Arabian Nights*  
as a little boy.)

ONCE on a time  
There was a little boy: a master-mage  
By virtue of a Book  
Of magic—O, so magical it filled  
His life with visionary pomps  
Processional! And Powers  
Passed with him where he passed.

. . . . .

I shut mine eyes . . . And lo!  
A flickering snatch of memory that floats  
Upon the face of a pool of darkness five  
And thirty dead years deep.

. . . . .

—Sailing to the Isles  
Of Khaledan, I spied one evenfall  
A black blotch in the sunset; and it grew  
Swiftly . . . and grew. Tearing their beards  
The sailors wept and prayed; but the grave ship,  
Deep laden with spiceries and pearls, went mad,  
Wrenched the long tiller out of the steersman's hand,  
And, turning broadside on,  
As the most iron would, was haled and sucked

Nearer, and nearer yet;  
And, all awash, with horrible lurching leaps  
Rushed at the portent, casting a shadow now  
That swallowed sea and sky; and then,  
Anchors and nails and bolts  
Flew screaming out of her, and with clang on clang,  
A noise of fifty stithies, caught at the sides  
Of the Magnetic Mountain; and she lay,  
A broken bundle of firewood, strown piecemeal  
About the waters; and her crew  
Passed shrieking, one by one; and I was left  
To drown. All the long night I swam;  
But in the morning, O, the smiling coast  
Tufted with date-trees, meadowlike,  
Skirted with shelving sands! And a great wave  
Cast me ashore; and I was saved alive.  
So, giving thanks to God, I dried my clothes,  
And, faring inland, in a desert place  
I stumbled on an iron ring—  
The fellow of fifty built into the Quays:  
When, scenting a trap-door,  
I dug, and dug; until my biggest blade  
Stuck into wood. And then,  
The flight of smooth-hewn, easy-falling stairs,  
Sunk in the naked rock! The cool, clean vault,  
So neat with niche on niche it might have been  
Our beer-cellar but for the rows  
Of brazen urns (like monstrous chemist's jars)  
Full to the wide, squat throats  
With gold-dust, but a-top

A layer of pickled-walnut-looking things  
I knew for olives! And far, O, far away  
A Princess of China languished! Far away  
Was marriage, with a Vizier and a Chief  
Of Eunuchs, and the privilege  
Of going out at night  
To play—unkenned, majestic, secure—  
Where the old, brown, friendly river shaped  
Like Tigris shore for shore! Haply a Ghoul  
Sat in the churchyard under a frightened moon,  
A thighbone in his fist, and glared  
At supper with a Lady: she who took  
Her rice with tweezers grain by grain.

. . . . .  
W. E. HENLEY.

X **FALLEN CITIES** *Fancy*

I GATHERED with a careless hand,  
There where the waters night and day  
Are languid in the idle bay,  
A little heap of golden sand;  
And as I saw it, in my sight  
Awoke a vision brief and bright,  
A city in a pleasant land.

I saw no mound of earth, but fair  
Turrets and domes and citadels,  
With murmuring of many bells;

The spires were white in the blue air,  
And men by thousands went and came,  
Rapid and restless, and like flame  
Blown by their passions here and there.

With careless hand I swept away  
The little mound before I knew;  
The visioned city vanished too,  
And fall'n beneath my fingers lay.  
Ah God! how many hast Thou seen,  
Cities that are not and have been,  
By silent hill and idle bay!

GERALD GOULD.

### FLEET STREET

I NEVER see the newsboys run  
Amid the whirling street,  
With swift untiring feet,  
To cry the latest venture done,  
But I expect one day to hear  
Them cry the crack of doom  
And risings from the tomb,  
With great Archangel Michael near;  
And see them running from the Fleet  
As messengers of God,  
With Heaven's tidings shod  
About their brave unwearied feet.

SHANE LESLIE.

## OFF THE GROUND

THREE jolly Farmers  
Once bet a pound  
Each dance the others would  
Off the ground.  
Out of their coats  
They slipped right soon,  
And neat and nicesome  
Put each his shoon.  
One—Two—Three!  
And away they go,  
Not too fast  
And not too slow;  
Out from the elm-tree's  
Noonday shadow,  
Into the sun  
And across the meadow.  
Past the schoolroom,  
With knees well bent,  
Fingers a-flicking,  
They dancing went.  
Upsides and over,  
And round and round,  
They crossed click-clacking  
The Parish bound;  
By Tupman's meadow  
They did their mile,

Tee-to-tum  
On a three-barred stile.  
Then straight through Whipham  
Downhill to Week,  
Footing it lightsome  
But not too quick,  
Up fields to Watchet  
And on through Wye,  
Till seven fine churches  
They'd seen skip by—  
Seven fine churches,  
And five old mills,  
Farms in the valley,  
And sheep on the hills;  
Old Man's Acre  
And Dead Man's Pool  
All left behind  
As they danced through Wool.  
And Wool gone by  
Like tops that seem  
To spin in sleep  
They danced in dream:  
Withy—Wellover—  
Wassop—Wo—  
Like an old clock  
Their heels did go.  
A league and a league  
And a league they went,  
And not one weary  
And not one spent.

And lo! and behold!  
Past Willow-cum-Leigh  
Stretched with its waters  
The great green sea.  
Says Farmer Bates:  
“ I puffs and I blows,  
What’s under the water  
Why no man knows! ”  
Says Farmer Giles:  
“ My mind comes weak,  
And a good man drowned  
Is far to seek.”  
But Farmer Turvey,  
On twirling toes,  
Ups with his gaiters,  
And in he goes:  
Down where the mermaids  
Pluck and play  
On their twangling harps  
In a sea-green day;  
Down where the mermaids,  
Finned and fair,  
Sleek with their combs  
Their yellow hair. . . .  
Bates and Giles  
On the shingle sat,  
Gazing at Turvey’s  
Floating hat.  
But never a ripple  
Nor bubble told

Where he was supping  
Off plates of gold.  
Never an echo  
Rilled through the sea  
Of the feasting and dancing  
And minstrelsy.  
They called—called—called:  
Came no reply:  
Nought but the ripples'  
Sandy sigh.  
Then, glum and silent  
They sat instead  
Vacantly brooding  
On home and bed,  
Till both together  
Stood up and said:  
“ Us knows not, dreams not  
Where you be,  
Turvey, unless  
In the deep blue sea;  
But axcusing silver—  
And it comes most willing—  
Here's us two paying  
Our forty shilling;  
For it's sartin sure, Turvey,  
Safe and sound  
You danced us square, Turvey,  
Off the ground! ”

WALTER DE LA MARE.

## THE PRINCESS AND THE GIPSIES

As I looked out one May morning  
I saw the tree-tops green;  
I said " My crown I will lay down  
And live no more a queen."

Then I tripped down my golden steps  
All in my silken gown,  
And when I stood in the open wood  
I met some gipsies brown.

" O gentle, gentle gipsies,  
That roam the wide world through,  
Because I hate my crown and state  
O let me come with you.

" My councillors are old and grey,  
And sit in narrow chairs;  
But you can hear the birds sing clear,  
And your hearts are light as theirs."

" If you would come along with us  
Then you must count the cost;  
For though in spring the sweet birds sing,  
In winter comes the frost.

" Your ladies serve you all the day  
With courtesy and care;

Your fine-shod feet they tread so neat;  
But gipsies' feet go bare.

" You wash in water running warm  
Through basins all of gold;  
The streams where we roam have silvery foam,  
But the streams, the streams are cold.

" And barley-bread is bitter to taste,  
While sugary cakes they please—  
Which will you choose, O which will you choose,  
Which will you choose of these?

" For if you choose the mountain streams  
And barley-bread to eat,  
Your heart will be free as the birds in the tree,  
But the stones will cut your feet.

" The mud will spoil your silken gown,  
And stain your insteps high;  
The dogs in the farm will wish you harm  
And bark as you go by.

" And though your heart grow deep and gay,  
And your heart grow wise and rich,  
The cold will make your bones to ache  
And you will die in a ditch."

" O gentle, gentle gipsies,  
That roam the wide world through,  
Although I praise your wandering ways  
I dare not come with you."

I hung about their fingers brown  
My ruby rings and chain,  
And with my head as heavy as lead  
I turned me back again.

As I went up the palace steps,  
I heard the gipsies laugh;  
The birds of Spring so sweet did sing;  
My heart it broke in half.

FRANCES CORNFORD.

### THE MOON IS UP

THE moon is up: the stars are bright:  
The wind is fresh and free!  
We're out to seek for gold to-night  
Across the silver sea!  
The world was growing grey and old:  
Break out the sails again!  
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.

We're sick of all the cringeing knees,  
The courtly smiles and lies!  
God, let thy singing Channel breeze  
Lighten our hearts and eyes!  
Let love no more be bought and sold  
For earthly loss or gain;  
We're out to seek an Age of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.

Beyond the light of far Cathay,  
Beyond all mortal dreams,  
Beyond the reach of night and day  
Our El Dorado gleams,  
Revealing—as the skies unfold—  
A star without a stain,  
The Glory of the Gates of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.

ALFRED NOYES.

### TO A SNOWFLAKE

WHAT heart would have thought you?—  
Past our devisal  
(O filigree petal!)  
Fashioned so purely,  
Fragilely, surely,  
From what Paradisal  
Imagineless metal,  
Too costly for cost?  
Who hammered you, wrought you,  
From argentine vapour?—  
“ God was my shaper  
Passing surmised,  
He hammered, He wrought me,  
From curled silver vapour,  
To lust of His mind:—  
Thou couldst not have thought me!  
So purely, so palely,

Tinily, surely,  
Mightily, frailly,  
Insculped and embossed,  
With His hammer of wind,  
And His graver of frost."

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

## THE COMMON STREET

THE common street climbed up against the sky,  
Gray meeting gray; and wearily to and fro  
I saw the patient, common people go,  
Each with his sordid burden trudging by.  
And the rain dropped; there was not any sigh  
Or stir of a live wind; dull, dull, and slow  
All motion; as a tale told long ago  
The faded world; and creeping night drew nigh.

Then burst the sunset, flooding far and fleet,  
Leavening the whole of life with magic leaven.  
Suddenly down the long, wet glistening hill  
Pure splendour poured—and lo! the common street,  
A golden highway into golden heaven,  
With the dark shapes of men ascending still.

HELEN GRAY CONE.



**PART VII**  
**LIFE AND DEATH**



## PART VII.—LIFE AND DEATH

IT is difficult to say whether there is a distinctive attitude expressed in modern poetry treating of this greatest of subjects. Yet in reading the many such poems dating from Browning's latest period to the present day, one cannot help remarking that the note struck is usually, though not invariably, one of brave and healthy optimism.

"Vanity, saith the preacher, all is vanity," is no longer the dominant theme. Rather it is that life is worth the living, and death, too, is worth the dying. The cult of Fitzgerald's beautiful 'translation' of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* has passed, or is passing. "Let us eat, drink, and be merry" by all means, but not "for to-morrow we die," but because to-morrow we live—or at least with incorrigible optimism we persist in hoping so.

Thus the first two poems here quoted are exhortations to live bravely and to the full; while Stevenson's little *Requiem* denotes the happy Passing. *An Epitaph* strikes a more wistful note, and is quoted for its extreme beauty and simplicity; and the verses under the dedication *Margaritae Sorori* rise to a height of sublimity that has rarely been surpassed—the second verse being in itself perhaps the greatest poem that Henley ever wrote.

Of the structure of this last poem we shall have something further to say in the next section.

## LAUGH AND BE MERRY

LAUGH and be merry, remember, better the world  
with a song,  
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a  
wrong.  
Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a  
span.  
Laugh, and be proud to belong to the old proud  
pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden time,  
God made Heaven and Earth for the joy He took in  
a rhyme,  
Made them and filled them full with the strong red  
wine of His mirth,  
The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup  
of the sky,  
Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping  
by,  
Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine  
outpoured  
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the  
Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,  
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,  
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music  
ends.

Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my  
friends.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

### GAUDEAMUS IGITUR

COME no more of grief and dying!

Sing the time too swiftly flying.

Just an hour

Youth's in flower,

Give me roses to remember

In the shadow of December.

Fie on steeds with leaden paces!

Winds shall bear us on our races,

Speed, O speed,

Wind, my steed,

Beat the lightning for your master,

Yet my fancy shall fly faster.

Give me music, give me rapture,

Youth that's fled can none recapture;

Not with thought

Wisdom's bought.

Out on pride and scorn and sadness!  
Give me laughter, give me gladness.

Sweetest Earth, I love and love thee,  
Seas about thee, skies above thee  
    Sun and storms,  
    Hues and forms  
Of the clouds with floating shadows  
On thy mountains and thy meadows.

Earth, there's none that can enslave thee,  
Not thy lords it is that have thee;  
    Not for gold  
    Art thou sold,  
But thy lovers at their pleasure  
Take thy beauty and thy treasure.

While sweet fancies meet me singing,  
While the April blood is springing  
    In my breast,  
    While a jest  
And my youth thou yet must leave me,  
Fortune, 'tis not thou canst grieve me.

When at length the grasses cover  
Me, the world's unwearied lover,  
    If regret  
    Haunt me yet,  
It shall be for joys untasted,  
Nature lent and folly wasted.

Youth and jests and summer weather,  
Goods that kings and clowns together  
    Waste or use  
    As they choose,  
These, the best, we miss pursuing  
Sullen shades that mock our wooing.

Feigning Age will not delay it—  
When the reckoning comes we'll pay it,  
    Our own mirth  
    Has been worth  
All the forfeit light or heavy  
Wintry Time and Fortune levy.

Feigning grief will not escape it,  
What though ne'er so well you ape it—  
    Age and care  
    All must share,  
All alike must pay hereafter,  
Some for sighs and some for laughter.

Know, ye sons of Melancholy,  
To be young and wise is folly.  
    'Tis the weak  
    Fear to wreak  
On this clay of life their fancies,  
Shaping battles, shaping dances.

While ye scorn our names unspoken,  
Roses dead and garlands broken,

O ye wise,  
We arise,  
Out of failures, dreams, disasters,  
We arise to be your masters.

MARGARET L. WOODS.

### AN EPITAPH

HERE lies a most beautiful lady,  
Light of step and heart was she;  
I think she was the most beautiful lady  
That ever was in the West Country.  
But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;  
However rare—rare it be;  
And when I crumble, who will remember  
This lady of the West Country?

WALTER DE LA MARE.

### REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie:  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:  
*Here he lies where he long'd to be ;  
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## THE PASSING

*(Margaritae Sorori)*

A LATE lark twitters from the quiet skies;  
And from the west,  
Where the sun, his day's work ended,  
Lingers as in content,  
There falls on the old, gray city  
An influence luminous and serene,  
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends  
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires  
Shine, and are changed. In the valley  
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,  
Closing his benediction,  
Sinks, and the darkening air  
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—  
Night with her train of stars  
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!  
My task accomplished and the long day done,  
My wages taken, and in my heart  
Some late lark singing,  
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,  
The sundown splendid and serene,  
Death.

W. E. HENLEY.

## SAINT BRENDAN

ST. BRENDAN, he sailed the salt sea to the Island of  
Birds;

And when he sailed back to this coast, he spake holy  
words,

And they built a brown cell on the hill, where he  
tarried a day.

How long hath the thought of him lived, since he  
went the saints' way?

*"Hundreds of years," said the Bell. "Hundreds of  
years."*

The church still stands on the hill; the brown cell is  
gone,

Like the leaf from the desolate tree, like the sun from  
the stone.

How long shall the worshippers take the grey path  
to the door,

And the quick step past their own dead, on the grave-  
covered floor?

*"Hundreds of years," said the Bell. "Hundreds of  
years."*

The travail comes back to the earth, like the wave  
to the sand,

And the wars return in long waves that break on the  
land;

How long shall the sorrow be borne, in the eye of the  
sun?

How long shall man labour and pray till his doomsday  
be done?

*" Hundreds of years," said the Bell. " Hundreds of  
years."*

ERNEST RHYS.

## THE LEAF BURNERS

UNDER two oak trees  
on top of the fell,  
With an old hawthorn hedge  
to hold off the wind,  
I saw the leaf burners  
brushing the leaves  
With their long brooms  
into the blaze.  
Above them the sky  
scurried along  
Pale as a plate,  
and peered thro' the oaks,  
While the hurrying wind  
harried the hedge.  
But fast as they swept  
feeding the leaves  
Into the flame  
that flickered and fumed.

The wind, the tree-shaker,  
    shaking the boughs,  
Whirled others down  
    withered and wan—  
Summer's small folk,  
    faded and fain  
To give up their life;  
    earth unto earth,  
Ashes to ashes,  
    life unto death.

Far on the fell  
    where the road ran,  
I heard the men march,  
    in the mouth of the wind:  
And the leaf burners heard  
    and leaned down their heads,  
Brow upon broom,  
    and let the leaves lie,  
And counted their kin  
    that crossed over sea,  
And left wife and wean  
    to fight in the war.

Forth over fell  
    I fared on my way;  
Yet often looked back,  
    when the wind blew,  
To see the flames coil  
    like a curl of bright hair

Round the face of a child—  
a flower of fire,  
Beneath the long boughs  
where lush and alive,  
The leaves flourished long,  
loving the sun.

Much I thought then  
of men that went forth,  
Or dropt like the leaves,  
to die and to live;  
While the leaf burners  
with their long brooms  
Drew them together  
on the day of their death.  
I wondered at that,  
walking the fell—  
Feeling the wind  
that wafted the leaves  
And set their souls  
free of the smoke,  
Free of the dead,  
speeding the flame  
To spire on the air—  
a spark that should spring  
In me, man of men;  
last of the leaves.

ERNEST RHYS.

## A FIELD IN LUDWELL

I'm Barter's now: last year for Gatehouse I  
Nurtured a pretty crop of vetch and rye.  
When Barter's dead, some new-named man will say,  
"All this is mine," and go the deathward way.  
Rye, vetch and man, all to the seasons yield  
While I lie low, the same old smiling field.

W. J. IBBERT.

PART VIII  
FREE VERSE



## PART VIII.—FREE VERSE

WE sometimes meet with a form of poetry—of which several examples have already been quoted in this book—that seems to kick over the traces altogether with regard to metre and rhyme, and do just what it likes. On reading this kind of poetry for the first time—‘Vers Libre’ it is called—one may gather the impression that it is without form; but certainly not void. The thought is great, its expression is beautiful, and it is certainly not prose. The question is, is it poetry?

If one examines the many beautiful poems contained in the Bible, one is aware that the effect does not depend on metre, nor on rhyme, but upon the fact that every thought is told again in different language, or in another metaphor—a mode of expression that is called Parallelism. Again, old English poetry depends for its effect on Alliteration—certain words in each line beginning with the same letter—as in the poem called *The Leaf Burners*. Japanese poetry—called Hokku—consists of little poems expressing a single thought, and containing a small definite number of monosyllables. Rhyme, on which the effect of so much English poetry depends, is a comparatively late importation from France.

Thus it can be seen clearly that the poets of different nations and different periods have chosen to express themselves in various ways; and it is only because we are so used to exact form, and metre

and rhyme, that we are predisposed to think that verse that discards them is not poetry at all.

Yet this poetry—new to some of us, though not really new—does depend on a certain mode of expression, and this mode is called Cadence. The 'base' or 'unit' of this free verse is not a line consisting of a definite number of 'feet,' or 'beats,' but a whole 'strophe.' It is like running round a track in a given time. You may rush ahead, and then loiter; you may pause, and then hurry on; you may take many steps or few; but you must finish the round in the time appointed. This is what the poet does: he changes his pace to express the change and sequence of thought in his mind.

And after all, if a poet is not to express himself in his own way, who is to lay down the law, and make rules, saying "Thus far and no farther"? Take for example the great American poet Walt Whitman. The task he set himself was to write the poetry of Democracy; to invent, as it were, a mode and a 'language' by which the great free nation of America could adequately express itself. He refused to be bound by the rules and conventions of European verse. His sympathy and breadth of view were so universal that they could not be confined within the old limits. His adverse critics say that he was a genius who was too indolent to fashion and practise forms; but it is fairer to allow that at least he was a great musician who built up vast symphonies of thought. It would be fairer, too, for those who can-

not feel the greatness and beauty of Walt Whitman's *Out of the cradle endlessly rocking*, nor of W. E. Henley's *A late lark twitters from the quiet skies*, to admit that it may be a want in themselves rather than in the poets.

Very modern poets of this school have gone a step farther. They refuse to be bound by any of the old formalities; and their poetry is itself a revolt. Expression—self-expression—is their aim; and though the effect is often somewhat violent—in such a phrase, for instance, as “the sun’s hot eyelashes,” or “the breakfast-table offers itself in flat surrender,”—it is never dull or uninteresting, and often very brilliant.

The poem called *Jack* has been placed first in this section, because subject and cadence are easy to follow, and one cannot but be fascinated by its lightness of touch—so easy to spoil. Alter the cadence in, say, verse 9, and the effect is gone.

## JACK

### I

EVERY village has its Jack, but no village ever had  
quite so fine a Jack as ours:—

So picturesque,  
Versatile,  
Irresponsible,  
Powerful,  
Hedonistic,  
And lovable a Jack as ours.

## 2

How Jack lived none knew, for he rarely did any work.  
True, he set night-lines for eels, and invariably  
    caught one,  
Often two,  
Sometimes three;  
While very occasionally he had a day's harvesting or  
    hay-making.  
And yet he always found enough money for tobacco,  
With a little over for beer, though he was no soaker.

## 3

Jack had a wife.  
A soulless, savage woman she was, who disapproved  
    volubly of his idle ways.  
But the only result was to make him stay out longer,  
(Like Rip Van Winkle).

## 4

Jack had a big black beard, and a red shirt, which  
    was made for another.  
And no waistcoat.  
His boots were somebody else's;  
He wore the Doctor's coat,  
And the Vicar's trousers.  
Personally, I gave him a hat, but it was too small.

## 5

Everybody liked Jack.  
The Vicar liked him, although he never went to church.

Indeed, he was a cheerful Pagan, with no temptation to break more than the Eighth Commandment, and no ambition as a sinner.

The Curate liked him, although he had no simpering daughters.

The Doctor liked him, although he was never ill.

I liked him too—chiefly because of his perpetual good temper, and his intimacy with Nature, and his capacity for colouring cutties.

The girls liked him, because he brought them the first wild roses and the sweetest honeysuckle;

Also, because he could flatter so outrageously.

## 6

But the boys loved him.

They followed him in little bands:

Jack was their hero.

And no wonder, for he could hit a running rabbit with a stone.

And cut them long, straight fishing-poles and equilateral catty forks;

And he always knew of a fresh nest.

Besides, he could make a thousand things with his old pocket-knife.

## 7

How good he was at cricket too!

On the long summer evenings he would saunter to the green and watch the lads at play,

And by and by someone would offer him a few knocks.

Then the Doctor's coat would be carefully detached, and  
Jack would spit on his hands, and brandish the bat,  
And away the ball would go, north and south and  
east and west,  
And sometimes bang into the zenith.  
For Jack had little science:  
Upon each ball he made the same terrific and mag-  
nificent onslaught,  
Whether half volley, or full pitch, or long hop, or leg  
break, or off break, or shooter, or yorker.  
And when the stumps fell he would cheerfully set  
them up again, while his white teeth flashed in  
the recesses of his beard.

## 8

The only persons who were not conspicuously fond  
of Jack were his wife, and the schoolmaster, and  
the head-keeper.  
The schoolmaster had an idea that if Jack were  
hanged there would be no more truants;  
His wife would attend the funeral without an  
extraordinary show of grief;  
And the head-keeper would mutter, "There's one  
poacher less."

## 9

Jack was quite as much a part of the village as the  
church spire;  
And if any of us lazied along by the river in the dusk  
of the evening—

Waving aside nebulæ of gnats,  
Turning head quickly at the splash of a jumping fish,  
Peering where the water chuckled over a vanishing  
water-rat—  
And saw not Jack's familiar form bending over his  
lines,  
And smelt not his vile shag,  
We should feel a loneliness, a vague impression that  
something was wrong.

## IO

For ten years Jack was always the same,  
Never growing older,  
Or richer,  
Or tidier,  
Never knowing that we had a certain pride in  
possessing him.  
Then there came a tempter with tales of easily  
acquired wealth, and Jack went away in his  
company.

## II

He has never come back,  
And now the village is like a man who has lost an eye.  
In the gloaming, no slouching figure, with colossal  
idleness in every line, leans against my garden  
wall, with prophecies of the morrow's weather;  
And those who reviled Jack most wonder now what  
it was they found fault with.  
We feel our bereavement deeply.

The Vicar, I believe, would like to offer public prayer  
for the return of the wanderer.

And the Doctor, I know, is a little unhinged, and  
curing people out of pure absence of mind.

For my part, I have hope; and the trousers I dis-  
carded last week will not be given away just yet.

E. V. LUCAS.

## THE LUMBERMEN'S CAMP

(SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE)

LUMBERMEN in their winter camp, day-break in the  
woods, stripes of snow on the limbs of trees, the  
occasional snapping,

The glad clear sound of one's voice, the merry song, the  
natural life of the woods, the strong day's work,

The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the  
talk, the bed of hemlock boughs, and the bear-skin.

WALT WHITMAN.

## OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

I

OUT of the cradle endlessly rocking,

Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,

Out of the Ninth-month midnight,

Over the sterile sands, and the fields beyond, where  
the child, leaving his bed, wander'd alone,  
bare-headed, barefoot,

Down from the shower'd halo,  
Up from the mystic play of shadows, twining and  
twisting as if they were alive,  
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,  
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,  
From your memories, sad brother—from the fitful  
risings and fallings I heard,  
From under that yellow half-moon, late-risen, and  
swollen as if with tears,  
From those beginning notes of sickness and love,  
there in the transparent mist,  
From the thousand responses of my heart, never to  
cease,  
From the myriad thence-aroused words,  
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,  
From such, as now they start, the scene revisiting,  
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,  
Borne hither—ere all eludes me, hurriedly,  
A man—yet by these tears a little boy again,  
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,  
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and  
hereafter,  
Taking all hints to use them—but swiftly leaping  
beyond them,  
A reminiscence sing.

## 2

Once, Paumanok,  
When the snows had melted—when the lilac-scent was  
in the air, and the Fifth-month grass was growing,

Up this sea-shore, in some briers,  
Two guests from Alabama—two together,  
And their nest, and four light-green eggs, spotted  
with brown,  
And every day the he-bird, to and fro, near at hand,  
And every day the she-bird, crouch'd on her nest,  
silent, with bright eyes,  
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close,  
never disturbing them,  
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

## 3

*Shine ! shine ! shine !  
Pour down your warmth, great Sun !  
While we bask—we two together.*

*Two together !  
Winds blow South, or winds blow North,  
Day come white, or night come black,  
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,  
Singing all time, minding no time,  
While we two keep together.*

## 4

Till of a sudden,  
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,  
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,  
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,  
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward, all summer, in the sound of the  
sea,  
And at night, under the full of the moon, in calmer  
weather,  
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,  
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,  
I saw, I heard at intervals, the remaining one, the  
he-bird,  
The solitary guest from Alabama.

## 5

*Blow ! blow ! blow !  
Blow up, sea-winds, along Paumanok's shore !  
I wait and I wait, till you blow my mate to me.*

## 6

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,  
All night long, on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,  
Down, almost amid the slapping waves,  
Sat the lone singer, wonderful, causing tears.

He call'd on his mate;  
He pour'd forth the meanings which 'I, of all men,  
know.

Yes, my brother, I know;  
The rest might not—but I have treasured every note;  
For once, and more than once, dimly, down to the  
beach gliding,  
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with  
the shadows,

Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the  
sounds and sights after their sorts,  
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,  
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,  
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd, to keep, to sing—now translating the notes,  
Following you, my brother.

## 7

*Soothe ! soothe ! soothe !  
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,  
And again another behind, embracing and lapping,  
every one close,  
But my love soothes not me, not me.*

*Low hangs the moon—it rose late ;  
O it is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with  
love.*

*O madly the sea pushes, pushes upon the land,  
With love—with love.*

*O night ! do I not see my love fluttering out there among  
the breakers ?*

*What is that little black thing I see there in the white ?*

*Loud ! loud ! loud !*

*Loud I call to you, my love !*

*High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves ;*

*Surely you must know who is here, is here ;*

*You must know who I am, my love.*

*Low-hanging moon !*

*What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow ?*

*O it is the shape, the shape of my mate !*

*O moon, do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land ! land ! O land !*

*Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my  
mate back again, if you only would ;*

*For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

*O rising stars !*

*Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with  
some of you.*

*O throat ! O trembling throat !*

*Sound clearer through the atmosphere !*

*Pierce the woods, the earth ;*

*Somewhere listening to catch you, must be the one I want.*

*Shake out, carols !*

*Solitary here—the night's carols !*

*Carols of lonesome love ! Death's carols !*

*Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon !*

*O, under that moon, where she droops almost down into  
the sea !*

*O reckless, despairing carols.*

*But soft ! sink low ;*

*Soft ! let me just murmur ;*

*And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised sea ;*

*For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding  
to me,*

*So faint—I must be still, be still to listen ;  
But not altogether still, for then she might not come  
immediately to me.*

*Hither, my love !*

*Here I am ! Here !*

*With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you ;  
This gentle call is for you, my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere !*

*That is the whistle of the wind—it is not my voice ;  
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray ;  
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness ! O in vain !*

*O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

*O brown halo in the sky, near the moon, drooping upon  
the sea !*

*O troubled reflection in the sea !*

*O throat ! O throbbing heart !*

*O all—and I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

*Yet I murmur, murmur on !*

*O murmurs—you yourselves make me continue to sing,  
I know not why.*

*O past ! O life ! O songs of joy !*

*In the air—in the woods—over fields ;*

*Loved ! loved ! loved ! loved ! loved !*

*But my love no more, no more with me !*

*We two together no more.*

## 8

The aria sinking;  
All else continuing—the stars shining,  
The winds blowing—the notes of the bird continuous  
    echoing,  
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly  
    moaning,  
On the sands of Paumanok's shore, grey and rustling;  
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping,  
    the face of the sea almost touching;  
The boy ecstatic—with his bare feet the waves, with  
    his hair the atmosphere dallying,  
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at  
    last tumultuously bursting,  
The aria's meaning, the ears, the Soul, swiftly depositing,  
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,  
The colloquy there—the trio—each uttering,  
The undertone—the savage old mother, incessantly  
    crying,  
To the boy's Soul's questions sullenly timing—some  
    drown'd secret hissing,  
To the outseting bard of love.

## 9

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)  
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it  
    mostly to me?  
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping,  
Now I have heard you,  
Now in a moment I know what I am for—I awake,

And already a thousand singers—a thousand songs,  
clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,  
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life  
within me,  
Never to die.

O you singer, solitary, singing by yourself—projecting  
me;

O solitary me, listening—never more shall I cease  
perpetuating you;

Nevermore shall I escape, never more the reverberations,  
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent  
from me,

Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was  
before what there, in the night,

By the sea, under the yellow and sagging moon,  
The messenger there aroused—the fire, the sweet hell  
within,

The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clue! (it lurks in the night here some-  
where;)

O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

O a word! O what is my destination? (I fear it is  
henceforth chaos;)

O how joys, dreads, convolutions, human shapes, and  
all shapes, spring as from graves around me!

O phantoms! you cover all the land and all the sea!

O I cannot see in the dimness whether you smile or  
frown upon me;

O vapour, a look, a word! O well-beloved!

O you dear women's and men's phantoms!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)  
The word final, superior to all,  
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;  
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time,  
    you sea-waves?  
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

10

Whereto answering, the sea,  
Delaying not, hurrying not,  
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly  
    before daybreak,  
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word DEATH;  
And again Death—ever Death, Death, Death,  
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird, nor like my  
    aroused child's heart,  
But edging near, as privately for me, rustling at my feet,  
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears, and laving  
    me softly all over,  
Death, Death, Death, Death, Death.

Which I do not forget,  
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,  
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's  
    grey beach,  
With the thousand responsive songs, at random,  
My own songs, awaked from that hour;  
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,  
The word of the sweetest song, and all songs,  
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my  
    feet,  
The sea whisper'd me.

WALT WHITMAN.

## THE PARROT

("Psittachus eois imitatrix ales ab Indis."—*Ovid*.)

THE parrot's voice snaps out—  
No good to contradict—  
What he says he'll say again:  
Dry facts, like biscuits,—

His voice and vivid colours  
Of his breast and wings  
Are immemoriably old;  
Old dowagers dressed in crimpèd satin  
Boxed in their rooms  
Like specimens beneath a glass  
Inviolatè—and never changing,  
Their memory of emotions dead;  
The ardour of their summers  
Sprayed like camphor  
On their silken parasols  
Intissued in a cupboard.

Reflective, but with never a thought  
The parrot sways upon his ivory perch—  
Then gravely turns a somersault  
Through rings nailed in the roof—  
Much as the sun performs his antics  
As he climbs the aerial bridge  
We only see  
Through crystal prisms in a falling rain.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL.







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